GUIDE TO THE ND8 COPPER ESKIMO FILE

[This file deals with the Copper Eskimo who live in the Coronation Gulf area of the Canadian Northwest Territories, to the east of the mouth of the Mackenzie River, including southern Victoria Island. They form an almost pure-bred population of about 1000 which has been stable until recently. Caribou, seal, and fish were their mainstays, providing many of the necessities of life. They usually spent summers on the mainland, but traveled widely within their territory during the winter. They had been relatively unacculturated until about 1910, although there have been a large number of changes since that time brought on by the acquisition of Western cultural items, iron, the rifle, trapping for the fur trade, etc.

The Copper Eskimo file contains 29 sources, all of which are in English. The basic sources are four in number. 1: Jenness, by a noted anthropologist who spent four years in the area in 1914-1918, is a description of the social and spiritual culture of the Copper Eskimo, including information on population, trade, social organization, subsistence, and religion. 28: Jenness complements this volume, concentrating on Copper Eskimo material culture. 2: Stefansson, by a noted explorer who visited the Copper Eskimo between the years 1906 and 1912, gives a general ethnographic treatment of the people. 3: Rasmussen, by another noted explorer of the same period, concentrates on the "intellectual culture", social life, customs, beliefs, songs and legends, and religion. These four sources are admirably supplemented by the popularly written 29: Jenness, which describes life with a single family, including the seasonal pattern of life, history and beliefs. The other sources

supplement the information contained in these, e.g., 4: Jenness describes string figures; 9: Seltzer provides anthropometric data; 19: Cadzow and 20: Cadzow discuss aspects of material culture; and 27: Chown and Lewis examines blood groups genes. The Copper Eskimo file is quite a good one, and should be adequate for most comparative purposes. The materials in the file generally pertain to the period 1905-1925, with sketchy data relating to earlier and later periods. The file was processed between 1950 and 1970.]